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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Fifty-ninth session

Summary record of the 1249th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 22 October 2014 at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Ameline

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (*continued*)

Combined seventh and eighth periodic report of Poland (CEDAW/C/POL/7-8; CEDAW/C/POL/Q/7-8 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Poland took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland), introducing her Government's combined seventh and eighth periodic report (CEDAW/C/POL/7-8), said that the Government cooperated closely with civil society organizations and had consulted with a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women's groups in the preparation of the present report. The Polish Congress of Women, a women's movement with over 9,000 members, had played a particularly important role in that regard.

3. The Government continued to prioritize programmes aimed at promoting gender equality and had adopted effective anti-discrimination legislation. The Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment had been appointed in 2008 and was responsible for implementing the Government's policy on equal treatment and combatting discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, nationality and religion. A new law on equal treatment had also been passed in 2010 with a view to harmonization with the relevant European Union law. Similarly, the National Action Plan for Equal Treatment, adopted in December 2013, tackled discrimination against several groups, including women, and contained provisions designed to implement and monitor national equality legislation. Under the Action Plan, coordinators for equal treatment had been established in all ministries in an effort to coordinate government activities and streamline equality initiatives.

4. Concerning participation in public and political life, the Government had taken a series of steps to increase the number of women in the parliament. Under regulations introduced in 2011, gender quotas had been established for electoral lists and the number of women in local authorities had subsequently risen to around 25 per cent. The Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment had also carried out awareness-raising activities to encourage women to stand for the forthcoming general elections and had conducted joint activities with NGOs to increase women's presence in the political decision-making process. Similarly, the Government had taken steps to increase the number of women in decision-making positions in business and had called for the equal representation of women in management and supervisory boards in State-owned companies. Despite such efforts, however, less than 15 per cent of State-owned companies had a woman on their board of directors and only 7 per cent had a female managing director.

5. Regarding violence against women and human trafficking, the State party had signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and would ratify the instrument in the near future. In addition, the Government had taken a series of legislative measures to combat violence against women and had conducted a range of awareness-raising activities on the subject. A definition of human trafficking had also been incorporated into the Criminal Code in 2010 and a National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for 2013–2015 had recently been launched. A new Act on Aliens had entered into force in 2014, which contained a number of measures aimed at assisting potential human trafficking victims in Poland. The Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure had also been amended in June 2013 so as to provide adequate support and rehabilitation for victims of sexual offences and ensure that acts of rape were prosecuted by operation of law.

6. As for combating gender-based stereotypes, the National Broadcasting Council had established a regulatory strategy for 2014–2016 with a view to challenging patriarchal and stereotypical portrayals of women in the media and promoting gender equality. Primary and secondary school textbooks had also been reviewed and revised in order to eliminate references that maintained or reinforced patriarchal gender stereotypes.

7. Regarding employment, the Government had introduced several initiatives to reconcile work and family life and promote the equal sharing of childcare and household responsibilities between men and women, including increased access to State childcare, paid paternity leave, strengthened flexible working arrangements and greater social security benefits. As a result, the employment rate of women aged 15–64 years continued to increase yearly and currently stood at 53.4 per cent. Conscious of the persisting pay gap between men and women, the Government had also taken action to address the current wage inequalities and promote the principle of equal pay for equal work.

8. Steps had been taken to strengthen women's access to medical treatment and, as of 2014, women would receive free prenatal and postnatal check-ups. The Ministry of Health had also launched a national in vitro fertilization programme, which provided State-funded fertility treatment for eligible women.

9. As for disadvantaged women in Poland, the national censuses of 2002 and 2011 had revealed that the situation of women from national or ethnic minority backgrounds did not differ greatly from that of other women. The only exception was the Roma minority in which women and girls were particularly affected by marginalization. The Government had implemented a series of measures to address their situation and improve access to education and health services.

10. Lastly, in regard to statistical data on gender, she said that the recent agricultural census of 2010 and the national population and housing census of 2011 had collected data disaggregated, inter alia, by age, place of residence, education level, economic activity and sex, which had provided for a greater overview of the situation of women at a national and regional level. The Central Statistical Office had also undertaken several new initiatives, including the *Social Cohesion Study* in 2011, with a view to collecting additional data on discrimination on the grounds of gender.

Articles 1 to 6

11. **Ms. Neubauer** asked whether the Committee's previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/POL/CO/6) had been disseminated to all relevant ministries and the parliament and whether NGOs had been involved in their implementation. She also wished to know whether measures had been taken to ensure that national legislation fully complied with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention. Noting the low number of cases of gender discrimination brought before the courts, she enquired as to whether steps had been taken to enhance women's awareness and knowledge, in particular those belonging to the most disadvantaged groups, about their rights under the Convention and the related national legislation. Similarly, she requested further information on any instances in which the Convention had been invoked by individuals or directly applied or referred to in court proceedings in the State party. Lastly, she asked the delegation to provide data on the number and outcome of complaints of alleged discrimination on the grounds of sex and gender lodged by women during the reporting period with the Human Rights Defender (Ombudsman), and describe what steps had been taken to strengthen the Ombudsman's mandate, including the provision of adequate financial and human resources.

12. **Ms. Leinarte** asked whether the State party intended to establish a governmental body specifically responsible for promoting and upholding women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment and whether measures would be taken in the interim to ensure

that the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment and her office received adequate financial and human resources. She also wished to know how gender mainstreaming strategies had been implemented in Government ministries and agencies, including whether there was a coordination mechanism between the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment and the ministries, and whether strategies for gender mainstreaming had been introduced at the national, regional and municipal levels in all areas covered by the Convention.

13. Turning to the Government's cooperation with NGOs and civil society organizations, she asked whether State funding had been allocated to support the work of NGOs on gender issues. She also enquired whether procedures had been put in place to guarantee the effective implementation and monitoring of national legislation on equal treatment. Given that the Central Statistical Office did not collect data on instances of multiple discrimination, she also wished to know whether the State party intended to take steps to improve data-collection methods so as to make such information available.

14. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland) said that the national gender machinery had evolved significantly since the 1980s. The extensive mandate of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment had allowed the Government to gain a broader view of gender equality and discrimination in Poland and she cooperated on a regular basis with NGOs and women's groups, including women from ethnic minority groups and the Roma community, in her role as the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment.

15. The low number of cases of sexual harassment submitted to the Human Rights Defender could be explained, in part, by a lack of awareness among women of their rights under the Convention. Many women, however, brought cases of discrimination before the courts and therefore had access to justice and available remedies. The Government would conduct a campaign to raise awareness about the Human Rights Defender's mandate so as to increase the number of cases of discrimination submitted to his or her Office in future.

16. Regarding the budget of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, efforts had been made to establish a financial arrangement which would help it become more effective and efficient and the Government had considered allocating a separate budgetary line for its work. As for identifying all obstacles to equal treatment, steps had been taken to streamline gender policy and ensure that multiple and intersectional discrimination against women was addressed.

17. **Ms. Pawlęga** (Poland) said that national legislation provided for equal access to justice in cases of discrimination on the grounds of gender and sex and women victims of discrimination could seek redress. National legislation on equal treatment set forth guidelines for seeking redress and the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court demonstrated that a number of cases of discrimination had been heard and sentences handed down.

18. **Ms. Dąbrowiecka** (Poland) said that the national courts invoked European and international conventions in their judgements, particularly the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However, despite their awareness of the Committee's recommendations and general comments, the courts appeared reluctant to invoke the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

19. **Ms. Banaczkowska-Luszcz** (Poland) said that the recommendations contained in the Committee's previous concluding observations had been circulated to all the government ministries tasked with implementing the Convention and to the parliament. The National Action Plan for Equal Treatment 2013–2016 covered equal treatment in the labour market; the prevention of violence and the protection of victims; equal treatment in the health-care system; and equal access to goods and services. The Government had also taken steps to bridge the gender pay gap; to increase the participation of women in the Polish

economy and in the parliament; and to eradicate negative gender stereotyping in the media. In addition, school textbooks with discriminatory content had been withdrawn. The competent government ministries were required to submit an annual report on the action that they had taken to implement the National Action Plan to the Council of Ministers.

20. **Ms. Szymborska** (Poland) said that no statistics disaggregated by sex were kept on persons who filed a complaint with the Ombudsman but that there were plans to change the way in which such statistics were collected in the future. However, statistics disaggregated by sex were kept on persons who filed a complaint with the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment. Women had accounted for 45 per cent of those who had filed a complaint with the Office in 2013. The European Commission had recognized the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment as an independent body. Moreover, the Ombudsman had been accorded A accreditation status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, i.e. the national institution was deemed to be in compliance with the Paris Principles.

21. **Ms. Goś-Wójcicka** (Poland) said that Poland was required to collect the same data as the other European Union Member States. The Government also carried out its own studies in addition to those mandated by the European Union. In 2011, the Government had carried out a study to assess the living standards of the population. The data collected for the study was disaggregated by sex, which had allowed the Government to assess the gender gap in living standards. The Government carried out such studies every few years.

22. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland) said that it would be difficult to determine how much funding had been allocated to NGOs, as the funding in question came from different government ministries. The Equal Treatment Act defined both direct and indirect discrimination.

23. **Ms. Leinarte** asked how the Government mainstreamed a gender perspective into the activities of the different ministries and whether it had appointed focal points for gender at the ministerial and municipal levels.

24. **Ms. Neubauer** said that, while the Committee was pleased to learn that the Polish courts regularly referred to and applied the Convention, that information should have been provided beforehand in the State party's report or in its written replies to the list of questions. She requested additional information on the consultation process for the preparation of the State party's report. In particular, she wished to know whether the parliament had been involved in the preparation of the report.

25. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, enquired as to the obstacles preventing the State party from ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and when it might do so.

26. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland) said that all government programmes included a gender component. The Government had appointed coordinators for equal treatment within all ministries. There were also plans to appoint regional coordinators who would form a network with their ministerial counterparts and NGOs. The ministerial and regional coordinators would also undergo joint training. Ministerial coordinators were invited to take part in round-table discussions on issues of particular concern to women. There was a disagreement among some members of the parliament over whether Poland should ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The disagreement centred on the definition of gender contained in the Council of Europe Convention and whether it should be incorporated into Polish national legislation. The opinion of several legal experts had been sought with a view to resolving the disagreement. It was hoped that Poland would be able to ratify the Council of Europe Convention in the near future.

27. **Ms. Banaczkowska-Luszcz** (Poland) said that the report had been the subject of extensive consultations. Both the Committee of Ministers and the Council of Ministers had provided input into the report and NGOs had also been consulted during its preparation. However, the parliament had not been involved in preparing the report.

28. **Ms. Dąbrowiecka** (Poland) said that the Polish courts did not systematically disaggregate data by sex but did so when gender was significant, such as in cases involving rape or other forms of gender-based violence.

29. **Ms. Pimentel** said that, despite the fact that women had come to occupy 24 per cent of seats in the Sejm, the lower house of parliament, and 12 per cent of seats in the upper house, the Senate, following the entry into force of the Quota Act of 2011, they remained underrepresented. She enquired as to the reasons why the 35 per cent quota for female electoral candidates established in the Quota Act had not been fulfilled. She requested additional information on the temporary special measures adopted to accelerate de facto equality between men and women.

30. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** said that gender stereotypes in a Catholic country like Poland often stemmed from deep-rooted traditions and so were difficult to eradicate. She asked whether the State party had considered conducting an in-depth study into gender stereotypes to enable it to combat them more effectively, and whether it intended to launch campaigns to raise awareness of and to prevent gender stereotyping in the years to come. She also wished to learn more about the efforts undertaken by the Government to curb sexual and gender-based violence, which was prevalent in the State party. Lastly, she asked whether school textbooks had been checked for discriminatory content and revised accordingly.

31. **Ms. Hayashi**, noting that Polish criminal procedure was to be modified in accordance with the amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure in early 2014, asked whether the planned modifications had already been made and whether they included measures to assist women victims of rape or abuse with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities or in relationships of dependence and other vulnerable women subject to multiple discrimination. The Committee had received reports that only a small proportion of sexual crimes were reported and that rapists were seldom punished. She requested the State party to comment on those reports. She also wished to have further information on the training on gender issues provided to legal professionals and how its impact was assessed. She asked whether more budgetary resources had been allocated to measures to combat domestic violence following the amendment of the Act on Counteracting Domestic Violence in 2010 and why so many cases involving domestic violence were dropped.

32. **Ms. Acar** enquired as to the content of the declaration made by Poland upon signing the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and why some members of parliament took issue with the definition of gender set forth in the Convention.

33. **Ms. Leinarte** asked how long the national action plan for combating trafficking in human beings had been extended; whether the interministerial team for combating and preventing human trafficking established to advise the Prime Minister was directly responsible for implementing the national action plan on trafficking. Under what circumstances did Poland provide assistance to foreign nationals who were the victims of human trafficking? She requested clarification on the procedure for granting foreign nationals presumed to be victims of human trafficking temporary stay in Poland under the 2014 Act on Aliens. She requested additional statistical data on victims of trafficking and the causes of such trafficking in Poland. She asked whether Poland had concluded agreements with countries in the region with a view to combating trafficking in women and girls and whether the State party intended to criminalize prostitution.

34. **Mr. Karpiński** (Poland) said that a large number of police officers had received training on how to identify and deal with cases of domestic violence and, in particular, cases involving minors. Normally, national action plans for combating trafficking in human beings covered a two-year period. However, the Government had decided that the national action plan would cover a three-year period, namely 2013–2016. The results yielded by the action plan thus far could be consulted on the Government's website. The interministerial team for combating and preventing human trafficking was also responsible for assessing the situation of human trafficking in the country and worked with NGOs and international organizations to that end. The team could also provide input into legislation concerning human trafficking.

35. The procedure for granting temporary stay in Poland to foreign nationals presumed to be victims of human trafficking under the 2014 Act on Aliens involved filing an application with the relevant ministerial department. Under the procedure, foreign nationals could remain in Poland for a period of up to three months while foreign minors could remain in Poland for up to four months. Following the entry into force of the Act on Aliens, around 14 foreign nationals had been granted temporary stay in Poland and a number of foreign nationals placed in detention centres had been released. The Government had launched a programme to protect victims and witnesses in cases of human trafficking in 2006. Assistance was also extended to foreign nationals under the programme. Victims and witnesses in cases of human trafficking could avail themselves of the services of a national centre for emergency assistance directly without having to go through law enforcement officials. Over half of those referred to the national centre in 2013 were foreign nationals.

36. **Ms. Pawlęga** (Poland) said that the new measures adopted to protect victims of domestic violence included the immediate removal of the perpetrator from the home; the introduction of restraining orders; and the requirement for the perpetrators to undergo social rehabilitation programmes. A new approach was being taken to hearing victims of rape and sexual harassment in court. For example, perpetrators were no longer allowed to be present when victims were giving evidence. Victims also had access to a psychologist throughout the proceedings. The Government had disseminated information about the new measures widely and had provided public prosecutors and judges with training on how to deal with cases of domestic violence.

37. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland) said that the Government was investigating why so many cases involving domestic violence were dropped and had launched an awareness-raising campaign to combat the stigmatization of rape victims and to encourage them to seek assistance.

38. **Ms. Bartosiewicz** (Poland) said that the Government had launched a programme to assist the victims of domestic violence in 2006, which would continue to run until 2016. The amended Act on Counteracting Domestic Violence afforded victims of domestic violence better protection. The Act required persons working with the victims of domestic violence to receive special training. A 24-hour hotline for victims of domestic violence had also been set up. There were also plans to increase the current level of public funding for measures to combat domestic violence in 2017. Moreover, the Government had launched a programme to assist local authorities in developing mechanisms for providing adequate protection to the victims.

39. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland) said that Poland had signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and that the Council of Ministers had submitted a bill on its ratification to the Sejm. One expert opinion indicated that the Council of Europe Convention was perfectly compatible with national legislation. However, it was necessary to collect more expert opinions in order to convince those members of parliament who were opposed to its ratification of that fact and to reach a consensus. The reservations and declaration made

when signing the Convention could be viewed as a stopgap measure until the views of the opposing parties were reconciled.

40. **Ms. Skórka** (Poland) said that school textbooks were checked for discriminatory content and were not distributed to schools if they were deemed unsuitable. A list of approved textbooks was available on the website of the Ministry of Education.

41. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland) said that she had been at the forefront of the campaign to introduce alternating electoral lists in addition to a minimum 35 per cent gender quota. The parliament would vote on the bill to adopt alternating lists in the near future but there would be no immediate legislative amendment, as changes to electoral law were not permitted in the six months prior to an election and local elections were due in November 2014. The changes should, however, take effect before the 2015 parliamentary elections. The 35 per cent minimum quota for women was already respected by the Civic Platform but other parties had fewer women in their ranks, largely because women tended to be allotted less privileged positions on their lists. The adoption of the alternating list system should help to even out the imbalances.

42. The Minister of Science and Higher Education had recently issued an official Government definition of the Polish word for gender so that it no longer carried such pejorative connotations. Unfortunately, right-wing parties persisted in suggesting that implementing the Convention's provisions could place long-established customs and traditions under threat. However, the definition of gender did not violate any element of the Polish legal system and the Government would continue its efforts to guide and influence other members of parliament.

43. Prostitutes had not faced criminal penalties under Polish law since the 1950s, although other related acts could be prosecuted. Accordingly, no changes to the relevant legal provisions were needed or envisaged.

44. **Ms. Symborska** (Poland) said that various awareness-raising programmes to address harmful stereotypes were run for public officials at all levels of government. Polish fathers were encouraged to take parental leave and the judicial authorities were seeking to identify ways of improving the manner in which sexual offences were handled.

45. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland) drew the Committee's attention to a new NGO-backed television series which followed the life of a lesbian couple and was intended to mark the start of a far-reaching awareness-raising campaign to address the stereotypes linked with lesbian women.

46. **Ms. Korbasińka** (Poland) added that the health authorities were working to provide medical professionals with better training in how to care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons.

47. **Ms. Shulz** expressed grave concern about reports that the Catholic Church in Poland was waging a very active campaign against gender. Posters displayed in schools apparently warned parents to protect their children while a pastoral letter issued by the Polish episcopate had linked gender ideology with the destruction of the family, drug use and even paedophilia. She asked what the Government was doing to counteract the campaign and ensure that gender retained its proper meaning and was used as it had been over many years, in Poland and elsewhere, without demonization and in full respect for the principle of equality.

48. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** asked what was being done to combat negative stereotyping affecting Roma women and children and whether any targeted research that might serve as a guide for future action was under way.

49. **Ms. Skorka** (Poland) said that stereotypes of the Roma were hard to challenge, especially in Poland, where the community was small, self-contained, socially isolated and extremely patriarchal. Within the community, women were expected to occupy themselves solely with household chores, eschewing outside interests. Such stereotyping within the community, which was inevitably reflected outside it, was a barrier to efforts to promote more equalitarian values. However, although historically the Roma community in Poland had regularly been identified as a very low-status social group, some improvement in indicators was becoming apparent. In parallel, targeted educational and work preparation programmes were fostering a change in Roma women's self-perception, encouraging them to leave their households, pursue education and seek ways of professional advancement.

50. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland) said that the Polish episcopate had issued the aforementioned pastoral letter within the context of a wider debate that had been initiated by Pope Benedict and was not limited to Poland. The Minister of Science and Higher Education had responded to the central notion that gender was an ideology rather than a science by explaining the nature and purpose of gender studies and calling for broader public discussion. As a former academic in the field of gender studies, she herself had made a direct contribution to the discipline, seeking to clarify its scholarly foundations, the causes and consequences of stereotyping and the best way to address the problem. Government efforts to combat stereotypes were centred on targeted training for a range of professional groups, including civil servants, prosecutors and judges.

51. Although the word gender still had some negative connotations, lack of awareness was probably the main cause. The Government could not interfere with the teachings of the Catholic Church but would continue to expound its own views and position in response. It was hoped that the ongoing debate would encourage more and more people to reflect on the meaning of gender and gender equality and that, ultimately, the debate would yield positive results.

Articles 7 to 9

52. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that women's inclusion on electoral lists was not in itself sufficient to increase their representation in political office: they must also be assigned privileged positions. She asked about the current status of the bill to introduce the so-called zipper system in which every other candidate on a party list was a woman; whether the Government would amend the Quota Act to extend quota requirements and sanctions for non-compliance to internal elections and appointments to leadership positions within individual political parties; and whether quotas might be used as a means to address women's underrepresentation on the boards of State-owned and public listed companies.

53. Although women's overall representation in the judiciary was good, the evident proportionate decline in their numbers the higher the level of the court was a source of concern. Could the delegation explain the disparities, and the similar patterns apparent in the figures for women in diplomatic and consular posts, and provide details of the measures being used to correct them?

54. **Ms. Zou** Xiaoqiao asked whether the Citizenship Act accorded the same citizenship rights to children born of a foreign father and Polish mother as to children born of a Polish father and foreign mother; why, under the new Act on Aliens, residence was granted to foreign spouses of Polish citizens for a fixed period only; what procedures were in place for extending residence permits and protecting family rights; and whether gender-disaggregated data attesting to the number of foreign spouses in Poland were available.

55. **Ms. Fuszara** (Poland) said that, while the proximity of the local elections precluded any imminent amendment of electoral law, the legislative efforts were supported by training and awareness-raising initiatives, offered by both government bodies and NGOs, that were

designed to break down entrenched attitudes by encouraging more women to stand for office and more people to vote for them.

56. The proportionately greater number of women that had been elected to the Sejm could possibly reflect the differing electoral rules applied by the two houses. While the Senate used the single constituency system, members of the lower house were elected by proportional representation – a system in theory more favourable to equal opportunities and increased female representation. Although that theory had not always been borne out in practice, and the political will to apply it at all levels of government was lacking, the authorities would be experimenting with the proportional system in the forthcoming polls.

57. Soft regulations based on recommendations for good practice issued by the Warsaw Stock Exchange were in place to encourage an appropriate gender balance in the boardroom. According to the Stock Exchange's latest report, women were still underrepresented on management boards in listed companies but there were some glimmers of improvement. The Ministry of the State Treasury had issued guidelines indicating that by the end of 2015 at least 30 per cent of board members in State-owned companies should be women. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education had likewise introduced certain quota requirements, including for the supervisory boards of schools and universities.

58. **Ms. Fiedosewicz** (Poland) said that the State party was receiving rising numbers of citizenship applications and that, in 2013, around three quarters of the approximately 4,500 applicants had been granted permission to remain.

59. **Ms. Symborska** (Poland) said that recruitment to the foreign service was guided by the principles of competitiveness, openness and equal treatment and based on the competencies of the candidates. An equal treatment coordinator had been appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2011 to monitor compliance with the relevant regulations on equal treatment. As of March 2014, women accounted for over half of staff in foreign and diplomatic outposts and a third of staff at headquarters in Poland.

60. **Mr. Baurski** (Poland) said that a dedicated team established several years previously within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote the employment of Polish women in international organizations, including the European Union and United Nations, had had considerable success.

61. **Ms. Goś-Wójcicka** (Poland) said that the Central Statistical Office published official demographic data on an annual basis. The most recent figures showed that men accounted for three quarters of foreign nationals who married in Poland. Most of those men were from Germany, while most of the women who married in Poland were from Ukraine. More detailed data could be provided on request.

62. **Ms. Pawlęga** (Poland) said that women accounted for around two thirds of all judges and almost half of presiding judges. Appointments were made by collegiate decision on the basis of merit.

Articles 10 to 14

63. **Ms. Gbedemah** asked whether the Government planned to review the overprotective ordinance which prohibited girls from embarking on certain technical courses on the grounds that their health might be endangered while boys faced no such restrictions; what strategies were in place to ensure equal access to studies and the same conditions for career and educational guidance; whether temporary special measures might be used to that end, including to encourage more girls to pursue doctorate studies; why girls were more likely to drop out of vocational education than general education; why the Ministry of Science and Higher Education did not keep a record of the number of higher

educational institutes offering courses in gender studies; and whether teacher training institutes offered courses of that kind.

64. Citing reports which indicated that sex education was too often focused on marriage, abstinence and family life, sometimes taught by school counsellors or priests and in some cases optional, she urged the State party to provide comprehensive information about its efforts to ensure age-appropriate sex education, in fulfilment of the Committee's previous recommendation, and to introduce compulsory sex education that promoted healthy relationships and responsible behaviour through scientific and non-judgemental information. It should also take steps to ensure that schoolgirls who fell pregnant were reintegrated into the educational system instead of educated outside it. She would also like statistics about the educational progress of Roma women.

65. **Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla** expressed concern about the considerable wage gap that still separated men and women, particularly those who occupied more senior positions, and the absence of an effective tool for measuring and monitoring the gap. Without accurate data, appropriate corrective policies could not be developed. She would like to see more State funding being made available to support women entrepreneurs and increase the number of working women in general. The efficacy and transparency of workplace inspections should also be improved, not only to increase safety but also to ensure better protection against sexual harassment. She would like to know the rationale behind the State party's parental leave provisions, which limited fathers' entitlement to one week while women could take up to three years. That situation could have the effect of driving women out of employment. Lastly, she sought details of any plans to address the decline in the availability of day care and the huge disparities existing between urban and rural areas.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.